ACCIDENT PREVENTION IN THE HOME

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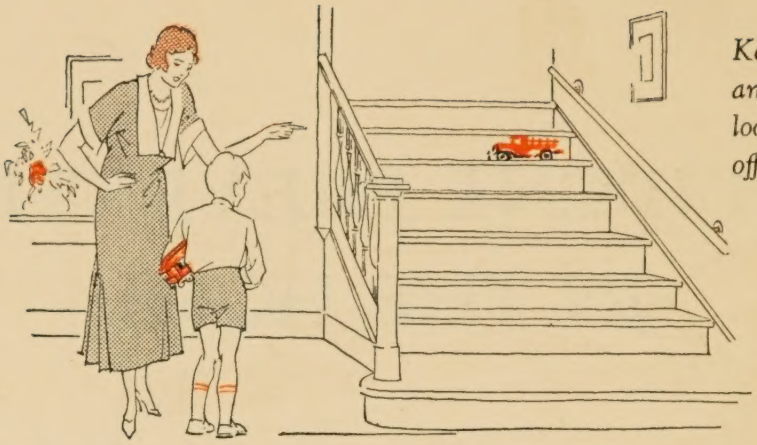
ACCIDENT PREVENTION IN THE HOME

"SAFE AT HOME" is an expression frequently heard. Today, however, nearly as many people are killed and more than four times as many are injured by accidents in their homes as by automobiles on streets.

Most of the accidents which occur in homes result from unsafe habits or from unsafe conditions which usually can be corrected without much cost or trouble.

This booklet is presented as an aid in finding and correcting these unsafe conditions. It also suggests precautions which, if followed, will save many children and adults from injury.



Keep toys and loose objects off stairways

FALLS

NEARLY half of all home injuries result from falls, the greatest number of which occur on steps. Properly lighted stairways free of toys, brooms, soap, and other household articles greatly reduce the danger of falls.

Window guards and well-constructed balconies and porches with railings of sufficient height and strength will prevent a large number of injuries caused by falls from high places in the home.

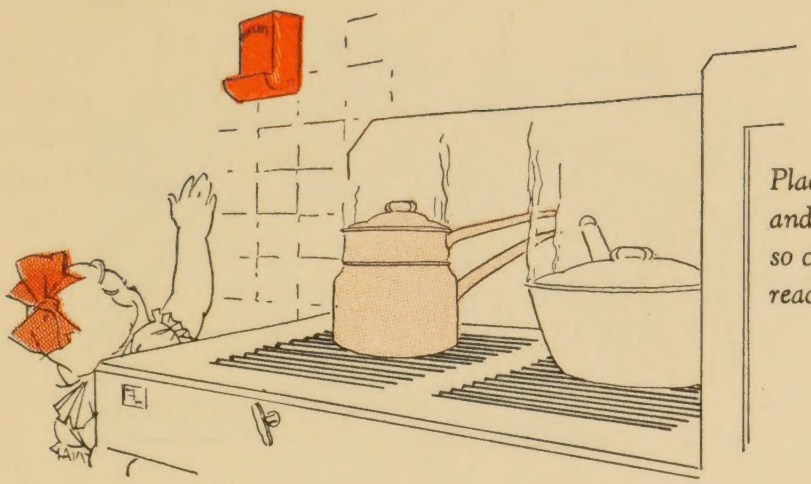
Small loose rugs on polished floors frequently are responsible for falls. Many injuries caused by tripping or stumbling over playthings, books, and other objects can be avoided by putting away such articles after use.

The prompt removal of ice, snow, grease, and other slippery substances prevents many falls, especially among elderly persons.

Standing on chairs, boxes, and other objects is a home accident cause which often results in serious injuries. The use of a good strong stepladder while hanging pictures, arranging curtains, cleaning shelves, etc., insures greater safety.

Rubber mats placed in bathtubs help to prevent slipping while bathing. Handholds on the walls are also useful safeguards for both tub and shower baths.

Remove Hazards Before Injuries Occur



Place matches and pot handles so children cannot reach them

BURNS AND SCALDS

BURNS and scalds cause about one fourth of all injuries in the home. Almost one half of these accidents happen to children under 15 years of age.

Many parents do not realize the danger of matches in the hands of young children. Fireproof matchboxes, placed where children cannot reach them, will overcome this danger.

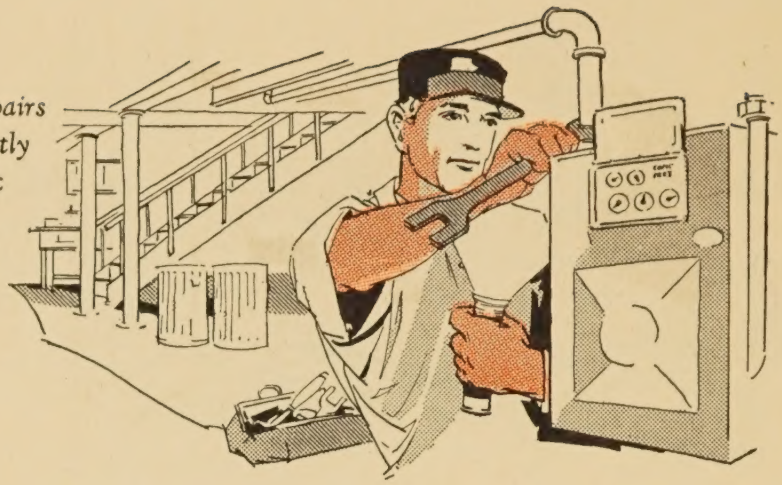
The use of gasoline and other inflammable fluids for cleaning is very dangerous, particularly indoors, as heat from rubbing an article may cause a fire or explosion. A noninflammable cleaning fluid is safer.

Children's curiosity about food cooking on stoves sometimes results in serious burns or scalds. Most accidents of this kind are prevented by placing pots and pans out of children's reach and by turning the handles toward the back of the stove.

The danger from open fires is reduced by the use of protective screens. Loose dresses and aprons ignite easily and should not be worn near open fires.

Very often children are burned to death when their clothes catch fire while playing with or near a fire. Children should be taught the danger of playing with fire and of coming too near a stove or fireplace.

Teach Children to Avoid Stoves and Open Fires



Have gas repairs made promptly by competent persons

ASPHYXIATION

MANY people think that gas asphyxiation occurs largely in gas plants or near mains. However, the careless and improper use of gas appliances in the home generally causes dangers greater than those to be found in the industry.

Gas pipes, hose, and fixtures repaired by amateurs often leak. The proper installation and repair of such appliances by trained men from the gas companies is essential for safety.

Before going to sleep or leaving a room indefinitely be sure to turn off the gas. Burning matches and lighted candles or oil lamps should never be brought into a room where gas is escaping, as an explosion may result. Gas flames may be extinguished by water boiling over on the stove, thus allowing gas to escape.

When gas is used for a long time, fresh air in the room is very important. In a closed or poorly ventilated garage a person may die from the fumes of a running automobile engine.

"Coal gas" often escapes from dirty or poorly kept furnaces, stovepipes, and chimneys. Possible suffocation from "coal gas" may be prevented by keeping the heating system clean and in good repair. Many heating devices give off carbon monoxide gas when the burners are not properly regulated. Unless flues are provided this gas is dangerous, especially in small unventilated rooms.

Learn the Prone-Pressure Method of Artificial Respiration

Keep poisons clearly labeled and where children cannot reach or find them

POISONS

IN MANY homes certain substances of a poisonous nature are used as germicides and insecticides, and for household cleaning. Although accidental poisoning does not often occur when using these substances, carelessness in storing poisons is the cause of many accidents of this kind.

Care in the handling and storing of poisonous materials is of great importance. If they are used for household purposes, they should be labeled poison and kept where children cannot find them. In some cases children have mistaken lye for sugar and eaten it, while in other cases children drank poisonous solutions which looked like soda water.

A built-in cabinet which can be locked is believed to be the best place to keep family medicines and drugs. Over one quarter of fatal poisonings result from the mistaken use of poisonous drugs or from overdoses of certain medicines. To avoid such mistakes many people place poisonous drugs in specially shaped containers or bottles with labels which show in the dark. A pin in the cork of a bottle is another good way to indicate a poison.

Know the Antidotes for Any Poisons Kept in Your Home

BE YOUR OWN HOME INSPECTOR!

FIRST, locate unsafe conditions and eliminate all hazards promptly. The following questions will aid you in making an inspection of your home:

1. Have you a strong, safe stepladder for reaching heights? .....
2. Are halls and stairways safe and well lighted? .....
3. Are means taken to prevent rugs from slipping, particularly on polished floors? .....
4. Is a rubber mat provided for the bathtub to prevent slipping? .....
5. Are metal boxes provided for storing matches out of the reach of children? .....
6. Have you a screen for use in front of open fires? .....
7. Are all gas pipes and fixtures tight, to prevent leaks? .....
8. Are your furnace and stovepipes clean? .....
9. Do you keep a metal container for hot ashes? .....
10. Have you a cabinet, which can be locked, for storing poisons and medicines out of reach of children? .....

SECOND, discover and correct unsafe habits which you or other members of the family may have. The following questions will be helpful:

1. Are toys, brooms, soap, and other articles kept off stairs and walks? .....

2. Are ice, snow, grease, or other slippery substances removed from stairs and walks promptly? .....

3. Do you, if possible, go out of doors to clean garments and use noninflammable cleaning fluids? .....

4. Have your children been taught the danger of playing with knives, scissors, bottles, and matches, or near stoves and open fires? .....

5. Do you make a practice of keeping garage doors open when engine is running? .....

6. Do you always turn off gas or disconnect electrical appliances before going to bed or leaving room for a long time? .....

7. Are cigars, cigarettes, and matches completely extinguished after use and placed in proper containers? .....

8. When clothes are being dried, are they hung at sufficient distances from stoves or open fires to prevent ignition? .....

9. Do you use safe tools and keep them in safe places? .....

10. Are your firearms kept where children cannot reach them? .....

Dispose of broken glass promptly and in a safe place

CUTS AND SCRATCHES

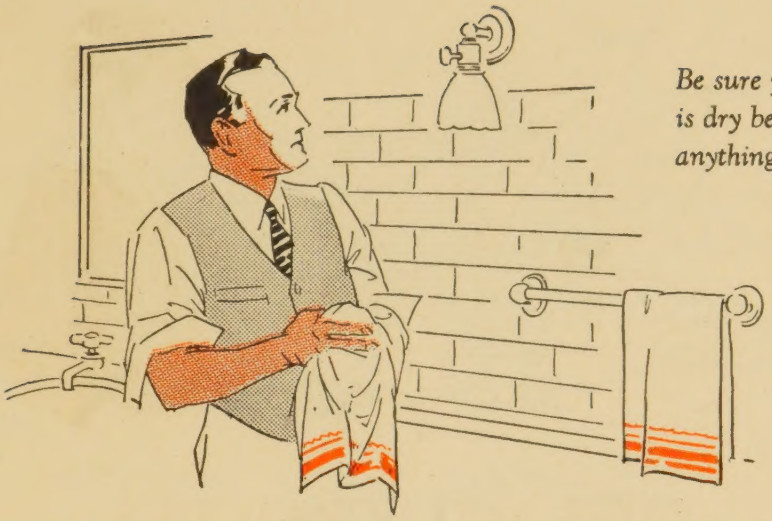
INJURIES frequently occur in homes through carelessness in handling tools, cutlery, and other articles which have sharp or pointed edges. Children who disregard or do not know the dangerous nature of such articles are often injured while playing with them. Small scissors with blunt edges are safer for children than those with long, pointed blades. Children should be taught not to play with bottles, sharp knives, and pointed tools, and not to run with sharp or pointed objects nor to place them in the mouth.

Broken glass, cans with jagged edges, old razor blades, and similar articles placed with ordinary household waste frequently cause serious injuries. Any material which is liable to cause cuts and scratches should be kept separate from other waste and placed in a strong, tight box or can.

Injuries result at times from the use of improper, worn, or makeshift tools, or the misuse of tools.

Pins and needles left on chairs or on other pieces of furniture, loose tacks or nails on the floor, and splinters in boards often cause puncture wounds which, if neglected, frequently become infected.

In Case of Injury Give First Aid Immediately



Be sure your body is dry before touching anything electrical

ELECTRICITY

THE USE of electricity has brought many comforts and conveniences to the home. However, when faulty or improper fixtures are used, electricity, even of low voltage, may cause serious injury or death.

Usually a shock is felt when any part of the body touches an electric current and a ground at the same time. If a person who comes from a bath or who is damp from perspiration grasps a faulty electric fixture while turning a water faucet, a severe shock may be received. In some instances breathing stops. If the current is not broken serious burns or even death may result. In other cases the person may fall against near-by objects and receive other injuries.

As a rule, the inspection and prompt repair or replacement of worn cords, broken fixtures, or defective electric devices will correct the more common electrical hazards in the home. Care is also important in avoiding electric wires or fixtures while touching faucets, pipes, drains, radiators, and other metal objects. Loose connections, poorly made splices, and home-made installations frequently cause flashes resulting in burns or fires.

Electrical Defects Are Constant Dangers

Burn rubbish in proper containers, away from the house

FIRES

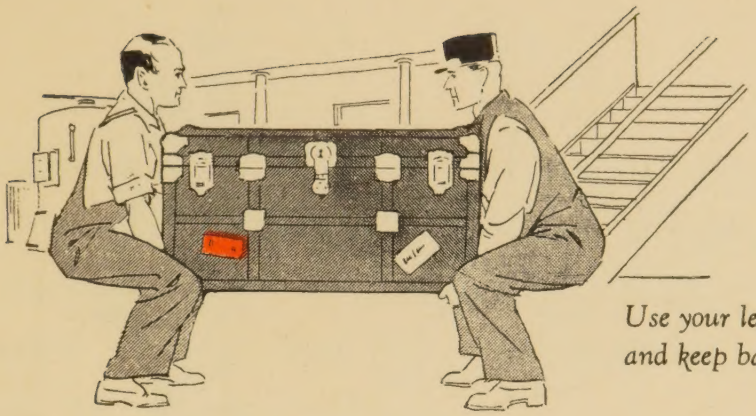
IN ADDITION to a large loss of property, fires cause the death of several thousand persons every year. Although burns cause most of the deaths from fire, fatalities also result from panic and suffocation by smoke.

Periodic cleanings of stovepipes and chimneys and the repair of loose joints and bad flues are good fire-prevention measures. Soot deposits frequently catch fire resulting in fires from sparks falling on roofs. Metal containers are best for hot ashes. Wire baskets keep burning paper and rubbish from blowing away.

Loose curtains, drapes, and similar material near stoves, lamps, gas jets, candles, etc., may easily catch fire. Lighted candles on Christmas trees are very hazardous and have caused much loss in life and property. Matches, cigars, and cigarettes also cause many fires when these articles are not put out after use. Rubbish piles should be disposed of promptly. Oily and greasy rags should be kept in metal containers, as, frequently, no light or flame is needed to ignite them.

To prevent fires from electrical defects it is best to have the electric light company or a competent electrician make electrical repairs and installations. Electric irons and similar appliances should always be disconnected before leaving a room.

Eliminate Fire Hazards



Use your legs when lifting and keep back straight

OTHER HOME HAZARDS

PAINFUL injuries may result from being hit by falling objects. Materials properly placed on shelves and in cupboards and closets are not only found easily when needed but also seldom fall if accidentally disturbed. Shelves should be strong enough to support the articles stored, as well as wide enough to hold them safely. Articles crowded into a space too small to hold them sometimes fall or cause other objects to fall when they are being removed.

People sometimes are injured seriously when attempting to lift heavy materials. If the object is not too big it should be lifted between the knees, keeping the back straight and the heels on the floor. To lift large or very heavy objects safely, help usually is advisable. Articles such as containers of hot liquids should be handled carefully, particularly when children are near, as the children may get in the way and cause injuries to themselves and others.

In many homes it is customary to keep firearms either for protection or for hunting. To prevent accidents, firearms should be placed under lock and key, or put away so that children cannot reach them. It is a good rule to unload, clean, and put away firearms immediately after use.

Maintain a Home That Is Safe

Keep small objects away from baby

OTHER HOME HAZARDS

(Continued)

Most small children put objects in their ears, nose, or mouth and serious injuries have been caused in this way. Before letting young children play on the floor, look for such articles as marbles, pebbles, tacks, pins, or seeds, and pick them up. Coins should not be given children; they are not clean and, if placed in the mouth, may be swallowed or become lodged in the throat. Objects left on the floor and furniture out of place are hazardous, particularly at night when left where persons usually pass.

Cisterns and wells should be kept covered or guarded in order to prevent anyone from falling into them. Very young children have sometimes been drowned by being left unguarded in bathtubs or while playing near washtubs.

Most labor-saving machinery for the home is equipped with devices to prevent contact with moving parts. When these safeguards are removed the use of appliances may be dangerous not only to adults, but also to children. To prevent accidents of this kind it usually is best to keep safeguards in place and to replace them at once following repairs.

Stray cats and dogs, when allowed in the home, often bring unsuspected dangers and may carry vermin and disease.

A Moment of Carefulness May Save Days of Suffering

FIRST AID—a manual which describes ways of treating various accidental injuries before the doctor comes, is a useful supplement to this booklet. It may be obtained from:

WELFARE DIVISION

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

1 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Metropolitan publications on street safety:

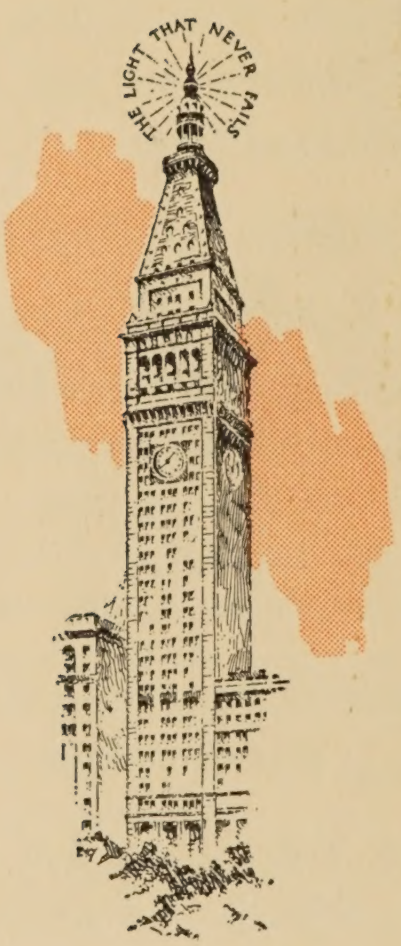
CHECK YOUR CAR FOR SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE

THE REAL DRIVER'S LOG BOOK

THE SAFE WALKER'S MEMO BOOK

THE JUNIOR SAFETY VOLUNTEER

COULD YOU STOP IN TIME? (*Poster*)



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